

EXHIBITION: The Restless Earth

Croatian Natural History Museum, Zagreb

May 2004 – June 2005

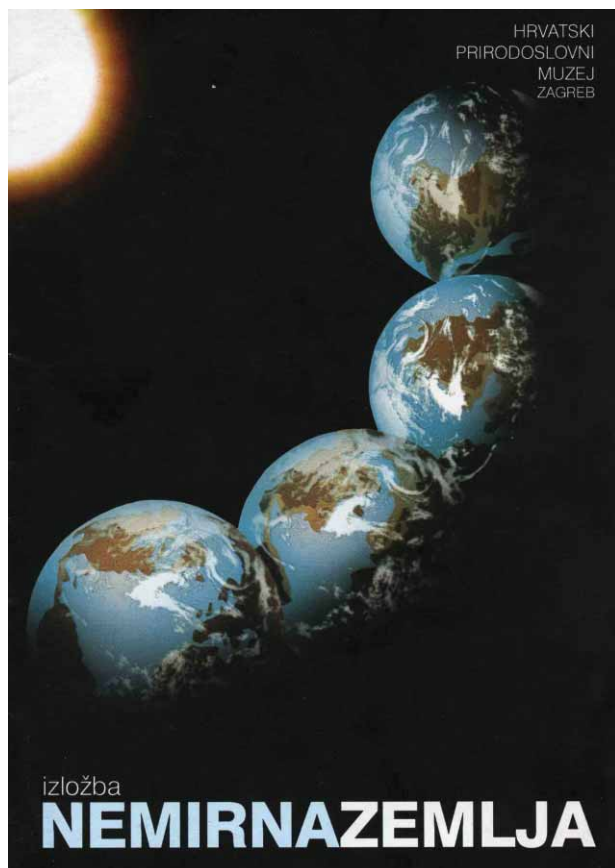
Museum adviser of the Geological and Palaeontological Department of the Croatian Natural History Museum Darko Rukavina MSc is the author of the exhibition *The Restless Earth*, which has been designed by the architect Željko Kovačić.

This exhibition is an unusual journey through the long period of time of about 5 billion years that has elapsed since the creation of the planet, in which the face of the Earth has changed, and in which life has arisen and developed, including our own life. The story of the Earth is told in original objects, fossils and rocks, as well as drawings, pictures, photographs, models, dioramas and interactive features, from the time of its development in the primordial universe, the changes that have happened during the billion years of its life. The exhibition tells the visitor that even today the Earth is far from peaceful, and draws attention to some of the processes in the interior and on the surface that are sensible and visible, for example with a depiction of earthquakes and volcanic activities.

In terms of conception the exhibition is divided into several linked but nevertheless rounded and to an extent independent units, which enables visitors, seeing over the exhibition, according to their interests, to go back and spend more time on one of the thematic sections dealt with: *The Earth and the Universe, Cross Section of Earth and the Earth's Core, The Lithosphere Plates – Floating Continents, Tectonics – folds, faults, thrust faults, Earthquakes and Volcanoes, The Lithosphere – the Hydrosphere – the Atmosphere, The Appearance and Development of Life on Earth*.

The exciting journey through this very substantial and dynamic exhibition starts with a breach of the dark Universe, in which after the Big Bang the formation of our planet started, ending in its current appearance of a large blue ball covered with white clouds covering parts of the continents, the mountains... This view from space of our planet, showing it to be but a little part of the large universe, is very impressive. The temporal span between the two scenes is the contents of the exhibition, telling the story of the transformation of Earth. The result of the events in the Earth's core is very clearly displayed, showing it to be like a jigsaw puzzle composed of the plates of the lithosphere. It is shown how through the shifting of these plates, the floating of the continents, there is crushing and stretching, splitting and thrusting of rocks, according to which structural forms of faults, folds and thrust faults are created. Very interesting is the visual approach (very acceptable to the younger visitors) through which the natural forces present in all these events are shown as the imaginary super-heroes so much in favour with the younger crowd.

The part of the exhibition about volcanoes and earthquakes vividly shows what happens when the plates of the lithosphere shift or clash and snap. The *way on* leads across the surface sphere visible to the human eye; what we walk on, sail on



and fly in (the lithosphere, the hydrosphere and the atmosphere). At the end of the journey, through the story of our planet, the appearance and development of life is shown, accompanied by light and sound effects. Life on Earth, through a time of more than a hundred million years, from the Pre-Cambrian until the present age, is shown in dioramas, models and of course fossils, among which a very impressive four-metre long and three-metre high mammoth, several dozen thousand years old, deriving from the sediments in the valley of the Sava and Drava, is easily dominant.

If we think of a tour of the exhibition as truly a journey, every exhibit can be experienced as a *research station*. Here the visitor can obtain succinct information about each exhibit, and anyone who wants to know more can obtain the booklet *Exhibition Guide*, as well as additional information obtainable on computers.

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